

Appln. No. 10/684,841
Amendment dated March 14, 2006
Reply to Office Action mailed December 8, 2005

REMARKS

Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 through 16 remain in this application. No claims have been cancelled or withdrawn. Claims 17 through 20 have been added.

The Examiner's rejections will be considered in the order of their occurrence in the Office Action.

Part 1 of the Office Action

Claims 1 through 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 (second paragraph) as being indefinite.

Claims 1 through 16 have been rejected on the basis that it is allegedly not clear if the steering table is claimed in combination with, or separate of, the pedestal guard. It is submitted that the claims, particularly as amended, define a steering table separate of the pedestal guard, and thus the pedestal guard is not claimed. More specifically, claim 1 recites "a top member having a slot extending therethrough *for receiving* a top portion of a pedestal guard, said top member defining a work surface" and "a bottom member being operationally coupled to said top member, said bottom member having an edge positioned below said slot in said top member so as to permit said edge to abut a back side of the pedestal guard *when the top portion of the pedestal guard is received in said slot of said top member*". Claim 2 requires "wherein said front edge having a pair of notches therein, each one of said notches *being for receiving* a back side of a rail of the pedestal guard, said notches increasing surface area of said bottom members contacting said pedestal guard". Claim 3 requires "wherein said top member includes at least one aperture extending therethrough, said aperture *being adapted for* receiving a beverage container". Claim 4 requires "wherein said top member includes a pair of apertures extending therethrough, each one of said apertures being *adapted for receiving* a beverage container, each

Appln. No. 10/684,841
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one of said apertures being positioned through an associated side of said top member behind said pedestal guard *when said system is installed on said pedestal guard*". Claim 13 includes language similar to claims 1 through 4. It is submitted that the language of the claims does not positively require the presence of the pedestal guard, but merely relates various structures of the steering table to the pedestal guard *when the steering table is mounted on the pedestal guard*. These stated relationships are not a part of the claimed structure, but merely statements of intended use.

Further claims 1 and 13 have been amended to recite, in part, "a top member having a slot extending therethrough for receiving a top portion of a pedestal guard, said top member defining a work surface" and "a bottom member being operationally coupled to said top member, *said bottom member having a front edge positioned below said slot in said top member so as to permit said front edge to abut a back side of the pedestal guard when the top portion of the pedestal guard is received in said slot of said top member*". It is submitted that the amended language of claims 1 and 13 clarifies the relationship necessary to achieve the claimed result.

Withdrawal of the §112 rejection of claims 1 through 16 is therefore respectfully requested.

Parts 2 and 3 of the Office Action

Claims 1 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Meeus.

Claims 3, 4, 11 and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meeus.

Claim 1, particularly as amended, requires "at least one spacer member coupled to said top member and to said bottom member to position said top and bottom members in a spaced and substantially parallel relationship with respect to each other *with at least a portion of said top*

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member being positioned above said bottom member". This relationship is disclosed in the specification and drawings of the patent application, particularly in Figure 6 of the drawings.

It is submitted that the prior art, and particularly the patent to Meeus, would not lead one of ordinary skill in the art to the combination of requirements of claim 1, particularly as amended, as the Meeus tray clearly shows a second part (4) that is completely horizontally offset from the third part (6) by the first part (5), which is shown in Figure 4 of the drawings of Meeus. In fact, it is submitted that the connection of the first part 5 to the rearward edge of the second part and the forward edge of the third part 6 could only lead one of ordinary skill in the art away from any horizontal overlap of the third part 6 by the second part 4.

It is therefore submitted that the Meeus patent would not lead one of ordinary skill in the art to the applicant's claimed invention as defined in claim 1, especially with the requirements set forth above, and therefore it is submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the prior art. Further, claims 3, 4, 11 and 12, which depend from claim 1, also include the requirements discussed above and therefore are also submitted to be in condition for allowance.

Withdrawal of the §102(b) and §103(a) rejections of claims 1, 3, 4, 11 and 12 is therefore respectfully requested.

Part 4 of the Office Action:

Claims 13 through 16 have been indicated as being allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in the Office Action.

Claim 13 has been amended in a manner that is submitted to overcome the section 112 rejection (see above), and therefore claim 13, as well as claims 14 through 16, is submitted to be in condition for allowance.

Appln. No. 10/684,841
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Part 5 of the Office Action

Part 5 of the Office Action states that claims 2 and 5 through 10 would be allowable if written into independent form with the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The above amendment incorporates the limitations of claim 1 (in its original form) into the recitation of claim 2, and therefore claim 2 is believed to be in condition for allowance.

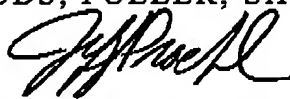
The above amendment incorporates the limitations of claim 1 (in its original form) into the recitation of claim 10, and therefore claim 10 is believed to be in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, early reconsideration and allowance of this application are most courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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